

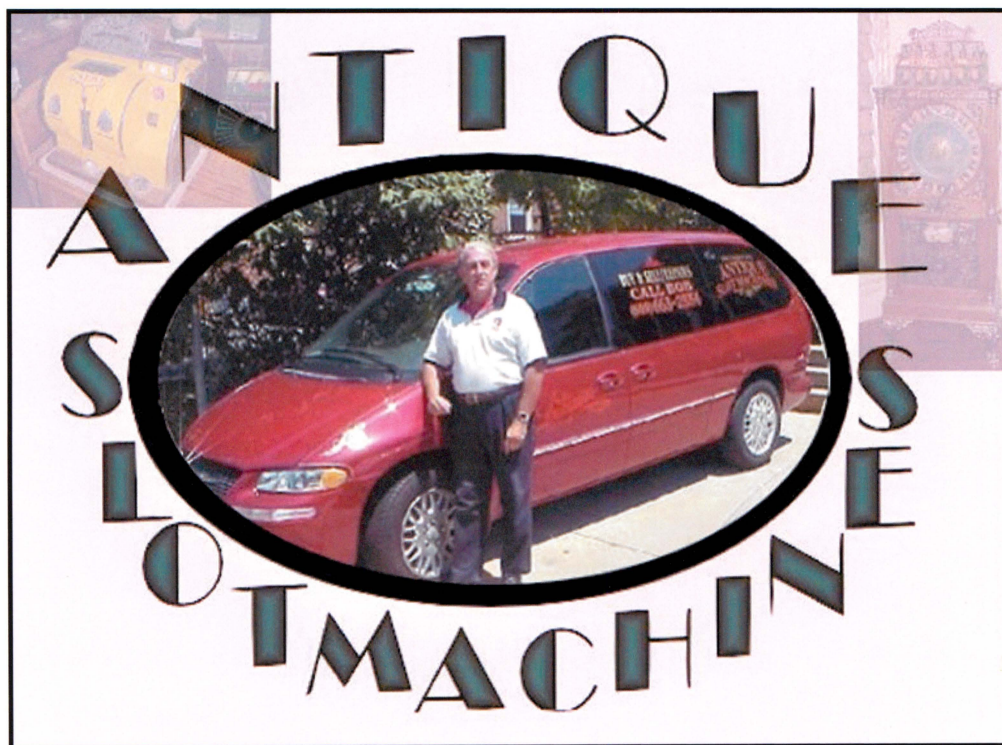
C.O.C.A. TIMES

VOLUME II
ISSUE 2
JULY 2009
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Message from Our President...

Hello fellow coin-op addicts and a special welcome to our new members. Our membership continues to grow each year. I hope each and every one of you enjoys being a part of our club.

At our spring meeting we returned to "The Victorian Palace" and home of Jasper Sanfilippo. I could tell by the smiles on your faces that everyone enjoyed their visit. We had 192 in attendance, and we were able to raise \$3840 for the Sanfilippo Foundation. 100% of the \$20 per person fee went directly to the foundation. As always Jasper was a perfect host. Thank you Jasper for a wonderful evening of fun.

Also at our spring meeting I was pleased to announce that the national COCA convention for 2010 will be held in Raleigh/Durham North Carolina. The dates will be Friday July 23 through Sunday July 25. We plan to tour 7 collectors homes, have 2 banquets, room to room trading, and an auction. Our host hotel will be the new Hilton Garden Inn Durham Southpoint. It is located next to one of the largest and newest malls in the South and only 10 minutes from Raleigh/Durham airport. Room prices will be \$109 for 1 King or 2 Queens and include full cooked to order hot breakfast. Please wait until August 1st to sign up for rooms. Full details will be available soon on our website (coinopclub.org). Sign up sheets will also be in the fall issue of COCA Times Magazine. Like all the rest of our great conventions this is one you will not want to miss!

Our club has also contracted with the Hilton Garden Inn, St. Charles IL. for the next 3 Chicagoland shows. Nov 12,13,14,-2009; April 8,9,10,-2010 and November 11,12,13,-2010. The rate is \$99 per room, single or double. Please be sure to tell the reservation agent that you are a COCA member when making a reservation, when checking in, and when checking out. Our rates for rooms and our meeting dinners are based on the number of room/nights that we use at the Hilton and we need you to make sure that we receive credit for your stay. This will help us to continue to obtain the lowest rates. Call them direct at 630-584-0700.

Our next meeting will be on Friday Nov. 13th at the Hilton. The cash bar will open at 5 with dinner at 5:30 and the meeting at 6:00. The election of officers will be conducted at this meeting. The nominating committee has selected the following candidates: Erick Johnson - President, Marsha Blau - Vice President, Doug Cain - Treasurer, and Lester Aaron - Recording Secretary. Nominations will also be taken from the floor. Our guest speaker will be Tim LaGanke. His topic will be how he acquired and sold his vast collection of penny arcade machines and his ensuing battle with the Internal Revenue Service. His talk promises be both enlightening and humorous.

I hope to see you in San Francisco for our 2009 convention or at our November meeting.

Bill Petrochuk
COCA President

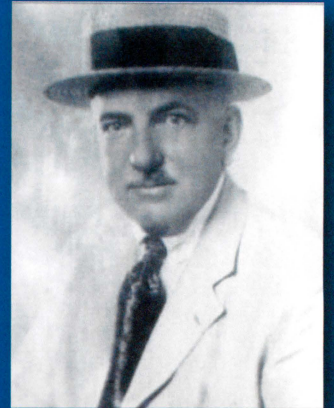


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**DEADLINE FOR
NEXT ISSUE:
AUGUST
8, 2009**

The Man in the Snow-White Suit



Roger Smith

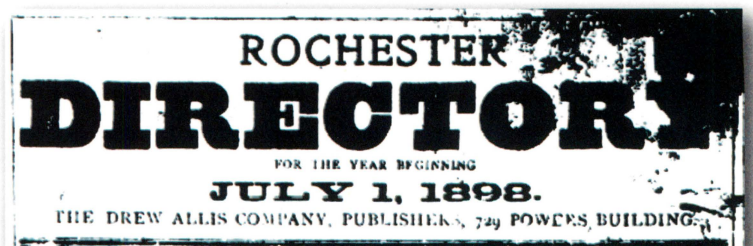
The Story of a Flamboyant Mayor and a Troubled Vending Empire

What does a world-traveling, over-the-top, publicity seeking millionaire bachelor Mayor of St. Petersburg, Florida, who was eventually recalled from office and charged with tax evasion, have to do with an often troubled New York State manufacturer of some of the most recognizable vendors of all time? Who was behind the short-lived gum company known for slogan contests, a teddy bear and a single surviving vendor? Why would chewing gum giant Wrigley sue a little upstart gum manufacturer and what does any of that have to do with a major maker of advertising buttons? It all involves Frank Fortune Pulver, the man behind Pulver Vending Company.

Humble beginnings

Born in 1871, as the youngest of five children of poor New York parents, Frank Fortune Pulver quit school early to help his family. He hawked newspapers and worked as a jeweler's apprentice at age 14. Whether this experience gave the young Pulver any insight into mechanical systems that might help with his later vending inventions, can only be guessed. Sometime before or during 1897, Pulver moved to Rochester, New York to join his brother, Henry, who was 10 years older than himself.

When the common chew was tobacco, Pulver spent \$200 on a spearmint gum formula in 1897 (one-third of the average annual wage for a worker in New York State at the time), and in the following year the Rochester City Directory for the first time lists the 19-year-old as "Pulver, Frank F & H.H. Gum mfrs. 21 North Water, Boards 3 Stanley park." The same listing goes on to list the same HH (Henry Harris) Pulver as "Optician, 92 East Main and (F.F & H.H. Pulver), 21 North Water, Boards 19 Amherst."



The next year, the Pulver Chemical Company made its appearance in the directory noting the brothers as principals and a listing an address of 25 Water Street. Frank was now also listed as a publisher and Henry retained his listing as an optician. Frank had moved his home (he appears to have rented for most of his life) to 96 Adams Street, one of several moves he would make over the next few years (five times in the just the next five years).

In 1897, Frank applied for a patent on the iconic single column vendor that was the fore-runner of all the later "Pulver" machines. This patent (#625,803) was granted on May 30, 1899, and assigned to his brother Henry. The granting of this patent gave the new company the boost it needed. In a 1933 advertisement Pulver would boast that "The Pulver Yellow Kid machine was the first automatic penny chewing gum vendor ever produced in the United States."

Frank's spearmint gum didn't sell well because chewing gum was still a

new product without the wide accep-

tance it would later achieve. A later biography describes a turning point when an acquaintance by the name of Kenny, who was a reporter, helped Pulver stage a public relations coup. The reporter staged Pulver's arrest on a street corner. The charge: giving gum to orphans. The stunt provided the needed publicity and soon Pulver's vending machines were dispensing the penny-a-piece sticks in volume.

Growth and change

The turn of the century brought optimism to the city and the Pulvers seemed pleased with the progress of their young company with Frank now listing himself as President of the company, with Henry listed as Secretary and Treasurer. While Frank continued to list a publishing business (at a separate address), Henry had abandoned his role as optician to concentrate on the chemical business. The January 26th edition of the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle announced the incorporation of the new company with a capital stock of \$50,000 (the equivalent of over \$1,230,000 today).

Interestingly, listed as an additional director, was Charles V. Chase, who would leave the company in 1902, to found his own competing Case Manufacturing Company (in Rochester), that also made vending machines. Patents filed by Case in 1903 and 1904 show a striking similarity to those of the Pulvers and may reflect a less than amicable separation from the company. It may have also foreshadowed a theme of fractious management that would haunt the company again in the future.

Despite having opened a branch office in Kansas City, Missouri, there may have been problems with the young company. On July 30, 1902, the Pulver Company reorganized as the Pulver Chemical Manufacturing Company, capitalized at the then staggering amount of \$150,000 (>\$3.5 million today) and with five corporate directors. Henry was one of the listed directors (secretary and treasurer), but conspicuous in his absence is Frank Pulver.

The new venture

The 1902 City Directory helps to cast some light on the missing Frank Pulver: He had moved to the production of celluloid advertising novelties with a new name (FF Pulver Company) and a new business address. Marked as Pulveroid, Pulver created bookmarks and advertising buttons that competed directly with the large manufacturer, Whitehead and Hoage, and even patented a perpetual calendar. Pulver was the main stockholder of the new company, but soon got into a major fight with the directors.

According to contemporary accounts, Pulver and two other members of the board squared off against the other two board members in a fight over control of the company. The fight was so contentious that the com-

pany was placed in the hands of a receiver in 1905. At the time the receiver took over, the company

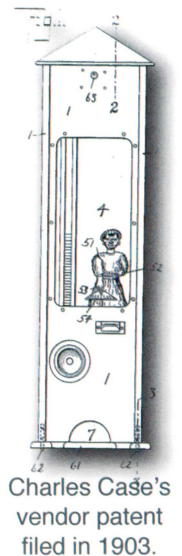
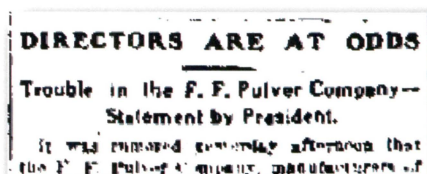
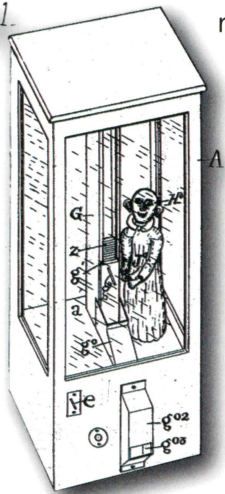


Fig. 1

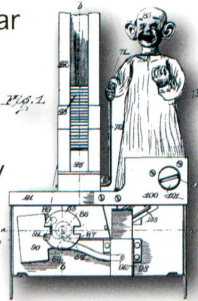


employed between 150 and 300 people. The only solution was to sell off the assets of the company. The inventory and machinery were sold to Bastian Brothers, then the largest manufacturer of advertising buttons.

Innovation continue

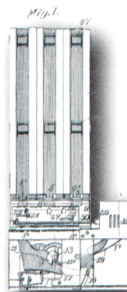
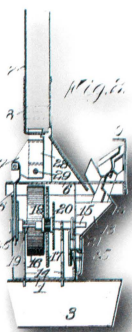
Frank wasn't the only inventor in the family. In January 1901, Henry filed a patent for a

metal case that carries a clear kinship to that used in the classic "long-case" pulver vendors. Interestingly, this patent was filed the same day the Frank filed his patent for an improved mechanism for the single column vendor.



By 1904, the Pulver company had been reborn yet again at another location and was now called the Pulver Chocolate and Chicle Co. Competition grew, with the 1905 city directory listing five chewing gum makers including names familiar to most collectors: TB Dunn, Chase Chicle, and the Lee-White Vending Machine Company.

Despite the corporate turmoil, Henry shouldered on filing two patents in 1903 (granted in 1904 and 1906) to improve the basic mechanism of the flagship vendor and provide a three column option. The leadership of the company seemed to have a steadier hand on the fortunes of the company, opening a branch in Chicago (named Pulver Chewing Gum & Chocolate Company), which would endure until 1918. In 1908, the Rochester company changed to Pulver Chocolate & Chicle Manufacturing Company.



An enigmatic offshoot?

About the time the FF Pulver Company was imploding, a new company made its appearance: the Continental Vending Company, located at 90 Mill Street, Rochester. State records indicate that the company was incorporated March 20, 1906. The 1906 City Directory lists Frank Pulver as "pres 90 Mill bds 126 Magnolia" but it does not indicate exactly what Frank was now President of. Certainly the commonality of

the address suggests that Frank was off on another corporate adventure, but hard evidence is lacking. The Directory listing for 1907 moves Frank to treasurer at the same address and this listing remains unchanged until 1914, though the Continental Vending Company is no longer listed in the business section after 1911. State records show that it ceased operations as a company, March 13, 1926

The Continental Vending Company was the trademark holder for "Di-Gesto" gum. Di-Gesto gum heavily advertised in the local newspaper, soliciting slogans and poems in a series of contests in late 1907 and early 1908. Some of these offered the princely sum of \$25 for a winning entry. Boys and girls could also send for a 1908 calendar located on the company's mascot bear's tummy. All of these trappings suggest a healthy company, but like so many of the enterprises that Frank Pulver was associated with, there must have been trouble brewing.



A small article in the Rochester Democrat Chronicle December 20, 1913, carries the cryptic notice that none other than the chewing gum giant William Wrigley, Jr. had sued Di-Gesto in 1910 over a the color and look of the Di-Gesto gum label. Wrigley had asked for \$750,000 in damages but after 3 years in court, the lawsuit was settled for an undisclosed amount. Rumors had apparently been circulating that Di-Gesto (or Continental Vending?) was to be sold to Wrigley. Despite the later statements of a biographer of Frank Pulver, no evidence for such a sale can be found.

CASE AGAINST LOCAL GUM MAKERS SETTLED

Objections by Wrigley to Package Effective.

Rumors were heard several days ago that the Di-Gesto Company, which has a factory at No. 100 Mill street, had been sold to the William Wrigley, Jr. Company, which has its principal offices in Chicago.

Inquiries of William Wrigley, Jr. by telegraph in Chicago on Tuesday elicited the information that the Wrigley company recently sued the Di-Gesto Company for an infringement of a Wrigley patent and that the Di-Gesto Company settled out of court. Mr. Wrigley denied that there was a deal under way for the purchase by his concern of the Di-Gesto Company, or any Rochester corporation.

Representatives of the Di-Gesto Company said yesterday that the matter had been in the courts for three years, it being alleged that the Di-Gesto Company imitated the wrapper and color scheme used by Wrigley. The Di-Gesto Company, it is understood, will cease to sell gum under the package to which the Wrigley Company objected.

The Wrigley Company in its complaint asked for damages of about three-quarters of a million dollars. A representative of the Rochester company said last night that the settlement did not involve the payment of any such amount.

One remaining curiosity about the Di-Gesto name persists. Despite the ties to Continental Vending as trademark owner, only one example of a Di-Gesto vending machine seems to have survived. This machine is magnificent. Over 18 inches tall, glass-enclosed and



glistening white porcelain, it proudly displays its product for all to see. The machine features two coin entries with a single actuator to deliver the product. The mechanism is simple and smoothly working — all the attributes that should have lead to commercial success. Why, then, did the company fail and so little evidence of its existence survive? Was it the impact of the lawsuit? Most likely that contributed to the final undoing of the company, but since it was filed in



1910, the company should have been well established by that time. Was it yet another problem with management struggles? Given Frank Pulver's penchant for management fights and a short corporate attention span, this seems a plausible speculation. Whatever the reason, Continental Vending and the Di-Gesto name represent a mysterious twist to a story that becomes even more unusual as it unfolds.

Pulver without a Pulver

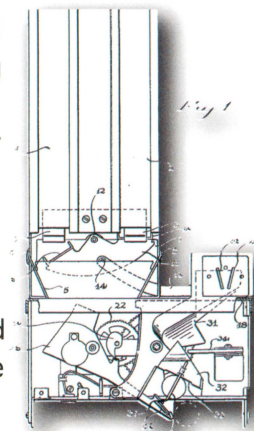
From 1909 to 1914, the Pulver Chocolate and Chicle Manufacturing Company enjoyed a period of apparent stability, but without a Pulver on the Board. The 1908 City Directory, just before the Pulver corporate name change, no longer lists Henry as Treasurer for the company and, in the 1909 listing, it lists him as "jeweler 69 Clinton av S h at W Henrietta." Later accounts indicate that both Frank and Henry sold their interests in the Pulver company in 1909. After the 1909 listing, Henry does not appear in the Rochester directories again until 1912. At this time he is listed as "gum mfr 90 Mill," the same address as no longer listed Continental Vending, but also the same address used for the first listing of the Compton Gum Company. (This is also the same address used for Frank Pulver and his listing as treasurer.) To add to the confusion, in the 1912 directory, there is an entry under gum manufacturers that reads "Pulver, Herbert H, 90 Mill." This is most likely a typographical error for Henry Harris because the 1913 listing appears to correct the error by listing Henry as a gum manufacturer at the Compton Gum Co. address. Just when we thought we had it figured out, the final listing for Henry H. Pulver occurs the next year (1914) that cryptically lists Henry as "removed to W. Henrietta" and Compton Gum Co. address is

now occupied by the Minto Company Inc. (The Minto Company Inc. lasts only until 1915.)

After the closure of Di-Gesto gum in 1913, Frank Pulver lists an office address that does not match up with any associated with the then existent 7 chewing gum manufacturers or the single vending machine company (Ryede Specialty Works) doing business in Rochester. Frank continues to use this address until 1917, when he lists only a home address and he begins an even more flamboyant phase of his life.

The Pulver Company goes on

In 1915, the Pulver Chocolate and Chicle Manufacturing Company made the last corporate name change it would have, becoming simply the Pulver Company, Inc. In 1917, George W. Wilson was listed as the manager of the company, being replaced in 1920 by Irl E. LaGrange. LaGrange remained the manager until 1926. In 1927, Stuart Burdette Burne assumed the role of Treasurer and General Manager of the company and remained in that role until the closing of the company in October, 1954. Burne is the individual responsible for the patent on the classic Pulver two-column clockwork vendors which have become a part of every collector's collection or want list. Made in white, brown, yellow, green (light and dark), blue, and the classic red, these machines were sturdy and reliable. With their animated figures they consistently attracted the pennies of several generations of patrons.



George H. Clark, who was also a Vice President of Eastman Kodak, was President of the company with James Johnson (former Comptroller of the City of Rochester and an insurance broker) as Secretary, Robert Y. Myers, Vice President, and Earnest E. Whitehead corporate attorney. These five made up the board of directors. Under the new leadership, the Pulver company flourished.

In 1928, the company had a national presence and the net profits of the company reached over \$55,000. (The equivalent of \$660,000 in 2007 dollars.) With assets of over almost \$400,000 (\$4.8 million in 2007) the company declared a \$6.00 dividend to its shareholders. This was the largest of any

dividend paid in the past 2 years. At the time there were 6,000 shares outstanding, but it is not known exactly how many shareholders this represented.

In his report to the stockholders, George Clark notes that “there is now in the courts a suit for infringement of a patent granted to a former officer of the company, but we are confident that this suit will be decided in our favor.” Court documents for this particular suit have yet to be located, but we certainly

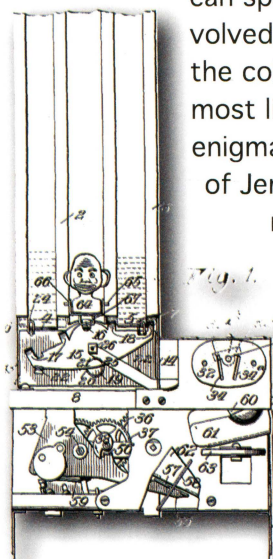
can speculate on the “former officer” involved. While it would be easy to guess the colorful Frank, in this case it was most likely his brother Henry or a more enigmatic member of the family Walter B. of Jersey City, New Jersey (though it is not clear that he was ever an officer of the company). Only the

first patent by Frank (which as assigned to Henry) was not assigned to the company (in its various forms over the years). Unless the patent rights reverted to either Frank or Henry during one or more of the Pulver Company’s reorganizations, the only patent owned by an individual would be that

original one, and the owner was Henry. The outcome of this suit is not known.

Regardless of these corporate bumps in the road, and a change in the capital structure of the company in 1925, the pulver company was clearly on solid ground. It chose to retain ownership of all of its vending machines despite their national distribution.

It did this through a network of representatives who placed and serviced the vendors. New laws, regulations and growing taxation had resulted in the company discontinuing the vending business in some locations.



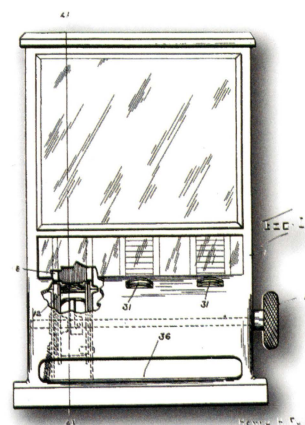
Patent by Walter B. Pulver

New directions for Henry

While Henry Pulver had disappeared from the Rochester City Directory in 1915, he reappears in the directory in 1922. He is listed as a watchmaker with a spouse, Libbie H. Pulver. (There are entries from 1919 to 1921 for a Henry G. Pulver who was also listed as a watchmaker, but the business and home addresses for this person do no match up with the later entry for Henry H. Pulver in 1922. Despite this, there is reason to believe that this represents a typographical error and this should have been Henry H. himself.)

In 1922, Henry filed what would be his last vending patent (granted in 1928) for a three column vendor that is very different from his previous machines. Interestingly, this patent had a quarter of the patent rights assigned to Henry’s wife, Libbie and a quarter assigned to Edward Allen Pulver. Edward appears to have been Henry and Libbie’s son, who joined his father in the watchmaking trade, having offices at 158 East Main, room 224. This working relationship continued while Edward continued to live at home with his parents from 1921 to at least until the last City Directory in 1929.

Henry Harris Pulver died on July 5, 1949, one day short of his 58th wedding anniversary.

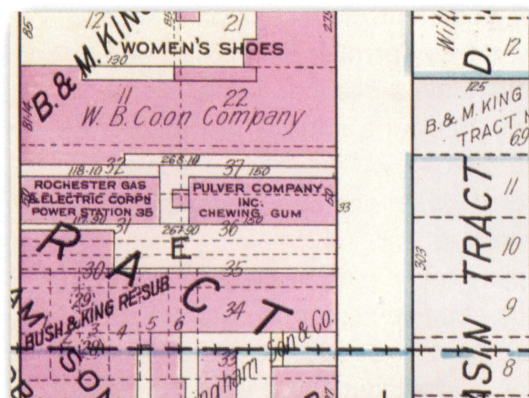


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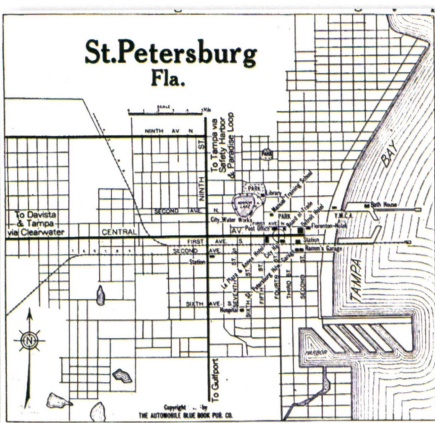
Flamboyant Frank strikes again

In the 15-20 years after Henry Morrison Flagler opened up the East coast of Florida, spending the winter at a Florida resort became the fashionable way for the affluent to escape the cold and doldrums of a Northern winter. Frank Pulver was one of those who escaped the cold of Rochester in this way. Sometime around 1915, Frank visited the town of St. Petersburg Florida and fell in love with the city. In 1917, he set up a home there, though he would maintain his Rochester home for another 2 years.

In 1919, Pulver bought the Detroit Hotel in St. Petersburg and later, for about \$20,000, the McAdoo Bridge that connected St. Petersburg with Pass-a-Grille. Frank went on to buy the Elk’s Club property



The Pulver plant was located at 60 Canal Street in this 1935 map.



St. Petersburg, Florida in 1919

and the Hollenbeck Hotel that was advertised in city directories as foremost among the top hotels of the city. Not one to be overlooked, Frank quickly became one of the city's most recognized and noted businesspersons.

In 1921, St. Petersburg

was somewhat of a

freewheeling city. Its mayor, Noel Mitchell, had been removed from office the year before for holding a Prohibition-era liquor party in his office. Mitchell found that there was nothing in the city's charter that prohibited him from running for office again, which he did against none other than Frank Pulver. When the 3,584 votes were totaled on December 20th, Frank Pulver had 2,172 versus Mitchell's 1,412 - Frank Pulver had become the first Republican Mayor of the city by a margin of 760 votes. Pulver's first demands: Have prisoners tidy his office, and he ordered officers to be clean-shaven stating that "cleanliness, always next to Godliness, should commence at home." The millionaire bachelor mayor was known for always wearing a snow-white suit. He originated a "White Suit Day" to celebrate spring's arrival. Always the charismatic leader, most business owners joined in the civic fun.

Mayor Pulver was an ardent and life-long promoter of the city and tourism. To help promote the city, Pulver and publicity guru John Lodwick invented the Purity League. Empowered by a supposed ordinance and the mythical Purity League who asked Pulver to "protect married men," they cruised beaches looking for "sea vamps" who dared to reveal too much skin in the new one-piece bathing attire that was all the rage. "What's the world coming to?"

Pulver would ask, tongue-in-cheek, as the women were photographed and escorted away. Northern newspapers reported the nonsense and other promoters copied the gimmick. On another occasion, a white-suited Pulver paraded down New



John Lodwick

York's Broadway with Florida beauties to promote the city. Traffic was snarled by the display, but tourism was the beneficiary.

Despite this fun-loving demeanor, Pulver locked horns with the city council over issue after issue. In 1923, with Pulver absent, the locals approved a change in the city's charter, by a vote of 431 to 356, that significantly slashed the mayor's power. Pulver fought the council who fired Police Chief Edward Bidaman because of his support of Pulver. Pulver kept Bidaman on, even after another chief was named by the council. "One police chief would jail the town drunks, the second chief would let them out," the St. Petersburg Times wrote. Despite the street theater this provided, the court later ruled that Bidaman had to go.

Pulver's political enemies accused him of graft and prohibitionists called "Uncle Frank" a bootlegger. Yet Pulver religiously donated his \$100-a-month salary to the Milk Fund for Needy Children. The people backed Frank during two attempts to recall him from office, but in January 1924, a third recall attempt succeeded and Pulver, like his predecessor, was removed from office.



THIS MAYOR IS STRONG for the one-piece bathing suit. He is Mayor Frank Fortune Pulver of St. Petersburg, Fla., and the delectable sample suits grouped about him are worn by Dorothy McClatchey and Margaret Collary (rear row), and Pauline Buhner, Mary Grigby, Mary Buhner, and Mary Bullard. Kinda snuggly picture, isn't it? (Photograph from International)

Enterprises and inditement

In 1923, in a half moon-shaped Quonset Hut at 515 22nd St. S, in St. Petersburg, Mayor Frank Fortune Pulver opened the Chatauqua Laundry, the forerunner of the Soft Water Laundry that became a landmark business in the neighborhood for more than thirty years. "I couldn't get the washing done, so I started the Soft Water Laundry Business," he said. The business eventually had two locations and, unlike many of Pulver's ventures, went on to flourish for more than 30 years.

Influenced by the New York tabloids Pulver had seen during his travels, on March 6, 1925, Pulver created a newspaper, *The Daily News*, located at 102 Second St. N. The first edition included 32 pages of syndicated features, wire news, real estate "readers" and "good-will" copy, and paid advertising. Pulver regularly used the tabloid to attack police and city officials. The police escorted Pulver's reporters from the station every day. Pulver's newspaper cost 3 cents a copy (or \$6 for an annual subscription), and though it boasted of the largest circulation in Pinellas County, the paper folded after little more than a year, \$200,000 in the red.

In the late 1920s, Frank tried to get the city's water supply switched to Weeki Wachee Springs (in which he had a part ownership). While the effort failed (the city went with Cosme-Odesa) the debates, white suit and all, were apparently crowd pleasers.

Frank Pulver ran afoul of the Federal government in 1936. He was charged with income tax evasion and the federal government's attempted to collect \$20,000 in back taxes. It is said that Frank Pulver smiled and told a reporter "It puts me in a class with Andrew Mellon and J.P. Morgan, — It's the highest compliment that could be paid me."

At age 65, Frank Pulver was not done inventing. In his last patent, filed in 1936, Frank took the idea of an animated vendor and combined it with the then popular Mickey Mouse who had appeared in his first color movie (*The Band Concert*) the year before, to create the Chic-o-Berry vendor. Completely unauthorized by Walt Disney Company, the patent was assigned to Alliance Investment Corporation of Genesco, New York (30 miles south of Rochester). Whether it was the effects of war, availability of quality gum or the ill advised use of a copyrighted figure, the Chic-o-Berry vendor never became a commercial success, with a limited number surviving to today.

The end of an epoch

Frank Pulver lived long enough to see the end of the Pulver vending company 1954. At age 80, he was still actively running his laundry business and following is credo, "Get things done, hire good men, treat

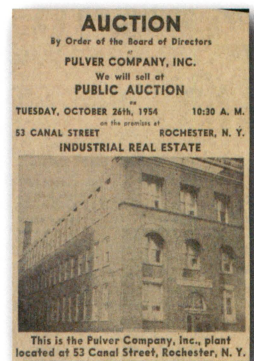
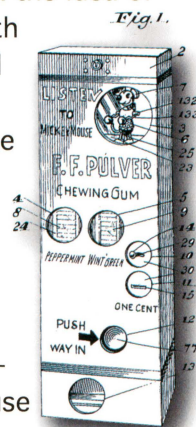
them right." When asked, he said "I had an uncle that lived to be 103. I don't expect to get that old. You see, he didn't travel as fast as I have."

The Pulver Company was a victim of rising sugar costs, increased competition and a population that was familiar with the rapidly becoming dated vendors. The company had been hit hard during World War II by restrictions on metal usage and gasoline rationing which made it difficult for its sales force to travel from location to location to service the machines. The company had gone from a high point of 100 employees down to 35 at the time of its sale. In its heyday, the company had more than 50,000 of its iconic machines on location around the country and took in over \$1,000,000 annually in penny sales.

The assets of the company were sold October 26, 1954. The firm of I. Shoolman & Associates oversaw the liquidation of the company. This included all of its manufacturing equipment, patents, parts, trademarks, tools, catalogues, blueprints and other business records. The Pulver building at 53 Canal Street was finely sold on September 8, 1955, to Perry T. Sweet and his wife Gladys who would use it as a warehouse for the firm Frenchman & Sweet, Inc. which operated a furniture and appliance business in Rochester. The final sale price for the building was \$32,000.

Brackett H. Clark was president at the time of the company's closing, W. Dewey Crittenden was Vice President, Secretary was Donald R. Clark, and the treasurer was S. Burdette Burne. The last two employees were Lillian F. Lussier, bookkeeper, and Fred P. Coffee who had been the long-time superintendent of the company.

Frank Fortune Pulver died in 1955 at his home in St. Petersburg, Florida. He was 84 years old. It is rumored that the ghost of Frank Fortune Pulver can be seen looking out of the windows on the second floor of the St. Petersburg City Hall, although that building was not built until 1939, years after Pulver left office. Maybe he's just looking for someone to join the party and have a stick of gum.



Frank F. Pulver

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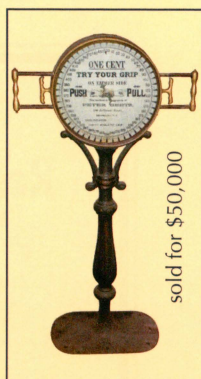
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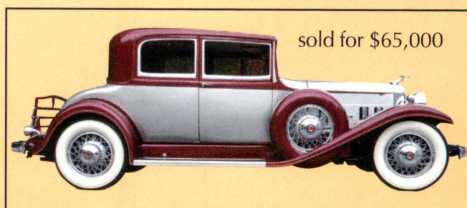
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sold for \$65,000



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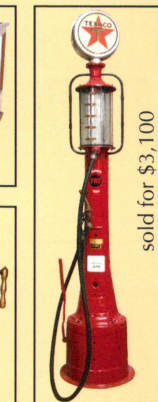
sold for \$2,400



sold for \$4,300



sold for \$43,000



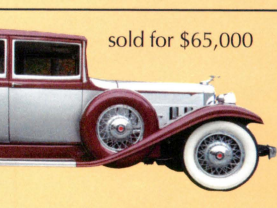
sold for \$3,100



sold for \$53,000



sold for \$6,050



sold for \$65,000



sold for \$6,270



sold for \$4,500



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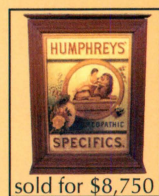


sold for \$29,000

salesman sample



sold for \$60,000



sold for \$8,750



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THE STRANGE SAGA OF THE DONKEY GOLD MINE

By Bill Howard

Exhibit Supply introduced the Donkey Gold Mine as a 1-cent or 5 cent floor model arcade machine in 1931. It is constructed of quarter-sawn oak with a paper Mache marquis and paper Mache interior design of a gold mine. The operation consists of a donkey driven cart that comes out of the mine as a mineshaft pulley works away in the background. As the cart arrives behind the front window, it circles around and deposits a gold brick with a fortune for the player's amusement. Its original condition is truly an attractive sight to behold. My machine pictured and featured on page 137 of my book, *Every Picture Tells a Story*, came to me through one of the strangest sequence of events of my collecting memory. The saga is as follows:

I had been in the habit of eating with my friend and mentor, Mike Gorski, about once a month on Sunday for some years. As was our custom, we would go out to his barn after dinner so Mike could fill me in on what was going on in his laboratory. On one such trip I discovered what was to become my Donkey Gold Mine sitting in the barn in fabulous, original condition except for one thing – it didn't work. Mike explained that it was extremely rare and undoubtedly the best example of three known to exist. He suspected the problem to involve the motor driven chain that pulled the donkey and cart from underneath the floor on the machine. His intention was his usual one – fix it up and make some money. I then did one of the brightest things of my collecting career. I asked him for first option via the right of first refusal when he got around to selling it, a practice Mike himself had urged me to employ since early on in our relationship. I offered him money for the privilege, but he said that wasn't necessary. This was before he became known as "Godfather", and would have told me



in a soft voice that there might be a day when I would be called upon to return the favor.

In any event, months went by and the "machine apple of my eye" remained with the Don of Westlake. You see, something very strange had happened. Old Mike begrudgingly admitted that he was stumped. And Mike is not stumped very often. He just couldn't get it to work. He discovered that it wasn't the chain. Maybe it was the cart. He contacted friend and collector Mel Getlin and made arrangements to borrow the cart from Mel's Donkey Gold Mine and experiment. This did not pan out as Mike would have liked. Finally, in frustration, he offered me the machine at a fair price with the understanding that I was to get it out of his basement, its new location, and get out fast. How I got it working was my problem.

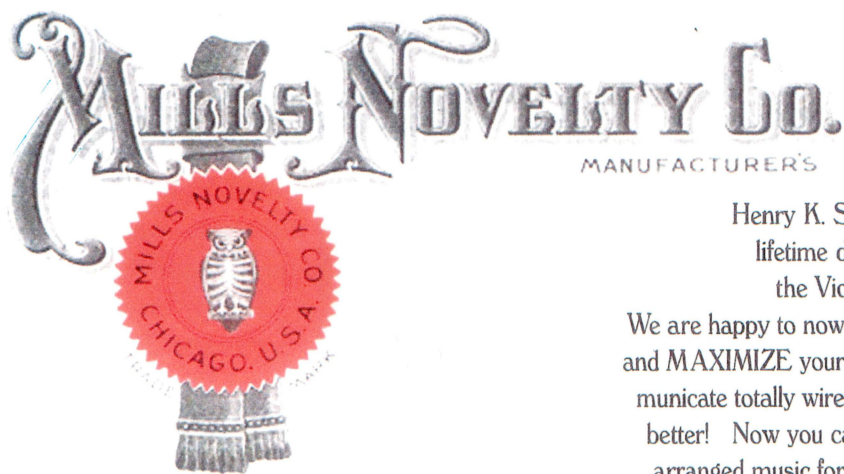
Now, sometimes logic can do you in. Logic told me that, if Mike couldn't get it to work and solve the mystery, what in the world would make me

think that I could. I have been a firm believer that, if he can't solve the problem, indeed there is a problem. And I had not as yet hooked up with friend and restorer, Ross Misner, the Rubber city Wizard.

So, I thought I did the right thing by telling Mike that I would buy it when he fixed it. Fortunately, I reminded him of my right of first refusal. Mike remembered, but did not seem happy.

A few months later Cindy and I went to a collector party at the home of another Cleveland collector, Bob Lintz. Of course, I ran into Mike and asked him how the old Donkey Gold Mine was coming. He replied that he was still stumped.

Our minds must work alike in some respect. For the rest of the evening I thought about how, to me, nothing came close to the potential and desirability of the old



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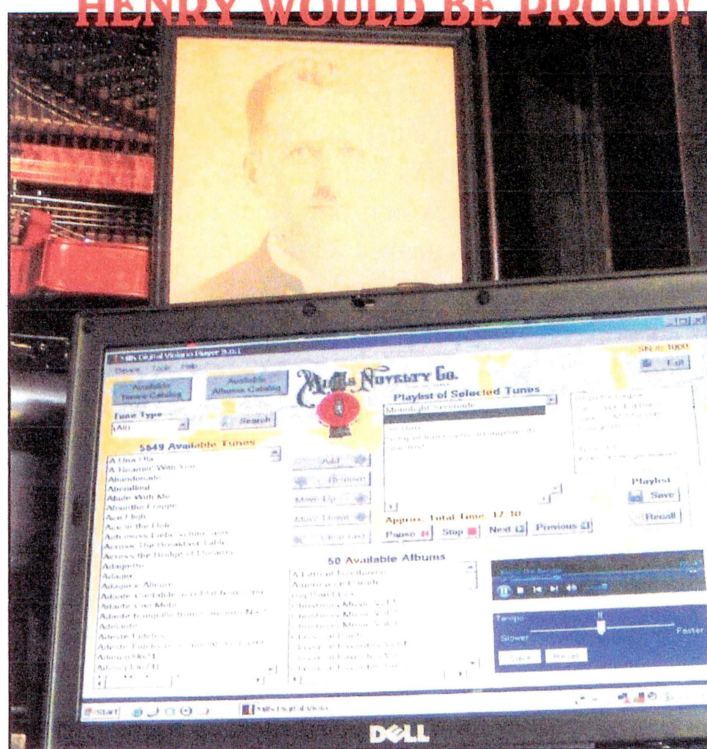
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AN OLD BUT TRUE COIN-OP STORY

By Ira Warren

Two events stand out in my mind for 1976---my marriage to Ellen and-----THE CLAWSON MACHINE CO. WAREHOUSE FIND, (the first slot manufacturer in America).

It begins with a very small ad in the miscellaneous section of The Antique Trader Newspaper.

It appeared once, it mentioned an IRS auction of the property of Shirley Mitchell, including his house, several barns, his large collection of various antique cars, all farm related equipment and many farm animals, all the land, a building with miscellaneous old stuff and---some---COIN-OPERATED ANTIQUES!

It would be handled by the Kruse Auction Company (famous for classic car auctions). It would be a closely kept secret only discussed in whispers among coin operated machine collectors for many weeks prior the auction date.

It would be an auction event held on location on top of a mountain in Stewart, Virginia---BUT---it was attended by a virtual who's who of coin-op collectors from all over the United States---each small group thinking no

one else would be there.

On one of the tables was a box of old papers including a flyer of the CLAWSON MACHINE COMPANY. I was standing around with several collectors looking through this box when I noticed something very different on this piece of Claw-



Photo 1



Photo 2

son paper. All previous knowledge of Clawson placed the factory in Newark, New Jersey (see photo 1) of the CLAWSON THREE JACKPOT MACHINE and close-up of the front casting photo 2). This paper indicated Flagtown, New Jersey.

Nothing happened for about a week. I called the late coin-op historian Dick Bueschel, and discussed my observation at the auction, asking him to do some research.

About a month later I got a call from Dick---he said "where do you think I am calling from?" Since I couldn't guess, he said he was in---NEW JERSEY.

Immediately, I invited him to come to New York for a visit--but it was late afternoon and he indicated he was on his way back to Chicago. BUT---he was in the back office of the ORIGINAL CLAWSON MACHINE COMPANY warehouse, the company no longer makes slot machines, BUT---there WERE MACHINES TO BE HAD---and would I be interested in the lead---I would have ran to my car, but it was already late in the day.

WOW!---I COULD HARDLY BELIEVE MY EARS. He said that based on my info about Flagtown he called a library there and asked the librarian if she would do some research on an old company named Clawson Machine Co.---THE MOST AMAZING THING HAPPENED NEXT---She said "why not do your own research and call the factory as it is located in Boonton and ask for John the owner". (as hard as this is to believe---IT IS ABSOLUTELY TRUE!)

He did just that---John was buying a building, needed money, and was willing to sell the “old stuff” left behind by the original owner and family---the name was CLEMENT C. CLAWSON.

Dick wanted Clement Clawson’s desk and spittoon, an 1892 Rothchild’s saloon supply catalogue that I never would have sold, (still the greatest saloon catalog)----- and---\$\$\$\$.

A DEAL WAS MADE---I drove out the next day, (after not sleeping at all the whole night). In the back of the building among the miscellaneous nothing pieces of just nonsense were the following---a box of original Clawson company business cards which I have given to many collectors over the years(see photo 3) ---a CLAWSON NEWARK RAINBOW, a cast iron side

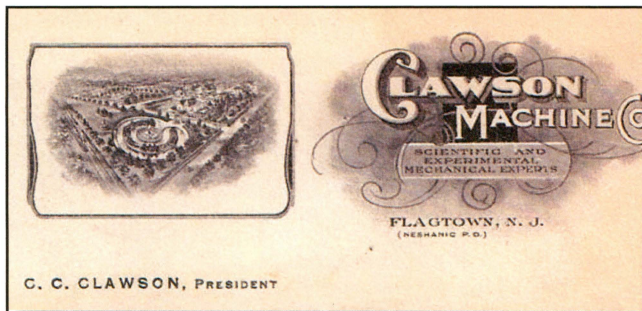


Photo 3

handle single wheel trade stimulator very much like the single wheel bicycle machine,---which I sold to Stan Harris. (A second one has never been found, look at the



Photo 4

printing of the original CLAWSON SLOT MACHINE catalogue---New York collector Ken Rubin is now the proud owner of that wonderful group currently resid-

ing in a shadow box display on his wall among some fabulous coin-operated treasures (see photo 5---which machines can you recognize?) Original patent papers



Photo 5

(from the US patent office) with fabulous ribbons for several Clawson machines including the famous Dice machine, (I have always been sorry that I sold this one), the original corporate seal in the shape of a cast iron lion’s head, (the seal and the patent papers are currently in the same collection (imagine that), and I am sure will



Photo 6

never leave)---many boxes of miscellaneous unknown and unused castings, (no recollection of what happened to them)---a wonderful cast iron antique copper plated candy vendor sold to Pennsylvania collector Jay Lowe, (see photo 6) AND---the only known example of a fabulous CLOCKWORK MECHANISM five cent upright color

wheel gambling payout machine along with pages from the original catalog showing this machine (see photos 7, 8, 9, 10 - next page), sold to the late California collector Sam Bergman (years later I helped broker this machine to Colorado collector Ed Borasio), then finally it went to California collector Greg McLemore through Victorian casino auctions---it still remains the ONLY KNOWN EXTISTING EXAMPLE), AND---a wood crate with 35 never used clock mechanisms (still wrapped in brown paper) for the Clawson dice thrower

machine (look closely at the photo of the upright mechanism and you can see that these clocks were also in the Clawson upright).

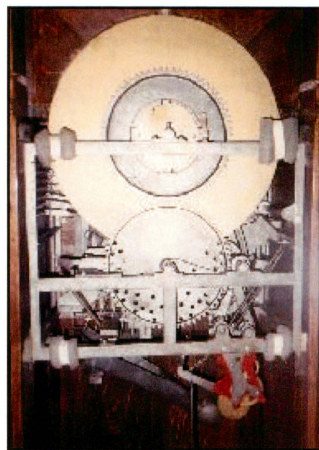
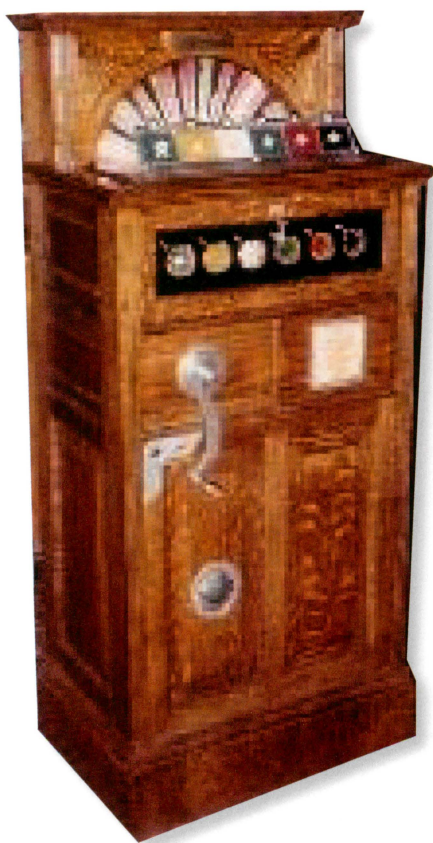
SEVERAL MONTHS LATER--while traveling through Ohio, collector Mike Gorski asked me what I was going to do with this crate of clock mechanisms (by now the word of this amazing find had made the rounds among collectors)---they were worth ABSOLUTELY nothing to me (which explains why there are not any photographs), so when he offered me a totally restored Wurlitzer 1015 Jukebox---I jumped at the deal---boy --did I take advantage of the old man of coin-op that time.

HOWEVER, crafty old Mike had other plans—and made 35 fabulous dice machines from that deal---OH--I almost forgot, I had to give him the name of another collector in Brooklyn, New York who had an original

Clawson dice thrower on original stand that I had sold him 6 years earlier---AND he managed to buy that as well, so he had an example to copy for his first ever group of REPLICATIONS, (I might point out that these fabulous DICE MACHINES are cherished by any collector lucky enough to be offered one---even now over 30 years later).

A long story but true. Mike went on to do more fabulous replications of early ROOVERS clock-work penny arcade machines that have been sold to collectors all over the world, and his memory of some of these events helped in the writing of this article---AND---my thanks goes out to New York collectors Murray Gottlieb who virtually begged me to share this story and to Ken Rubin for sending me the photo of the Clawson catalog cuts from his wall.

-- Photos 7, 8, 9, 10 --



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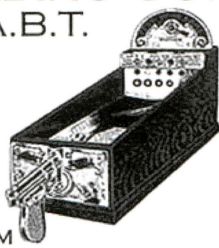
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BAND OF BROTHERS

by John Peterson

The apparent collapse of the world's financial markets today sends shivers up the spine of all but the most seasoned (and most likely, the oldest) among us. It is exceedingly painful to watch the accumulation of one's hard-earned efforts go up in the smoke of greed and miscalculation by those entrusted to manage and protect our financial nest eggs. The end result is far from certain at this time but I am confident that, unlike the bath water when the plug is pulled, civilization as we know it is not going down the drain. Such confidence would have been harder to find a scant 70 years ago during the last great war: World War II. The challenges then faced by Great Britain and her allies were monumental. The very existence of nations was at risk. The national treasure of men and blood was spent selflessly to preserve freedom. Sacrifice was the order of the day and it extended into all reaches of daily existence. The very fabric of national life was rewoven around the fight for survival. At no time since the birth of the United States was Thomas Paine's quotation from *The American Crisis* more appropriate: "These are the times that try men's souls." The perils we face today pale by comparison to those faced by the British and their European allies during World War II.

Even in the face of such adversity, life did go on. People married, babies were born, and a weary nation tried to divert its attention from the toils of war if only for brief moments of release. Viewed in this context, the amusement industry played an important role in helping to maintain the sense of normalcy desperately needed during this time of tremendous national stress. For a few pennies, anyone could forget the tribulations of war and take a brief mental vacation back to gentler times when the family would go to the seashore on their holiday and pass the hours playing games. It is important that the collectors of today recognize the historical importance of the machines from this unique time and seek to preserve them as an important benchmark from our past. These machines help illuminate a nation's best efforts during the worst of times.

The first and most obvious challenge facing producers was the shortage of supplies used in the manufacture of their games. The war effort required that almost

all metals be diverted to the manufacture of munitions and war-related products. Unlike their American counterparts, most British games were made of solid oak cases with metal mechanisms, usually brass or tin. By contrast, the American game of preference, the slot machine, was predominantly metal with only nominal use of a wood in the base or back door. Even with this wood advantage enjoyed by the British manufacturers, wood was at a premium and metal was simply not available. The result? Many British game manufacturers went out of business during the War.

One notable exception to this was Oliver Whales of Redcar. A prolific manufacturer of allwins and other arcade games, he survived the war and continued producing stock into the 1960's when changes in technology and public taste finally put him out of business. His secret during the war years? He bought out competitors as they went bankrupt. With their stock in addition to his own he was able to convert pre-war machines to games that focused on the perilous times at hand.



An excellent example of this is the game in Photo A, "Khyber Pass." Many of you will recognize the back-flash as reminiscent of the British Manufacturing Company game, "Cresta Run." The resemblance is striking and for good reason. When BM Co. went out of business during the War, Whales purchased their stock and from it created this game with historical reference to the Brit-

ish military adventures in the Hindu Kush mountains between Afghanistan and Pakistan. (Note: For those interested, a more thorough analysis of this game was



published in my article, "Khyber Pass," "C.O.C.A. Times," November, 2005.) This particular game is not mentioned in any reference books about British arcade games. I happen to know this machine is a war game from Oliver Whales

due to a stamped block inside the game that documents the game as having been tested for "O. Whales on July 14, 1943 by H. Smith." When a winning shot is made into the "V" shaped gallery, an interior battery illu-



minates the stream in the valley on the center of the playfield, Photo B. The sophistication level of this game including the battery, an item that had to be in short supply during wartime, guaranteed that this game would be produced in extremely limited numbers. I have not seen another "Khyber Pass" to date.



The next two examples, Photos C and D are more typical of the genre of games produced during the War. Both are allwins but without any of the expensive electrical components employed in "Khyber Pass". There is an additional feature that makes these two games more distinctive than the normal allwin. Both of these

machines are "giant" allwins, meaning they are larger than the standard size game. The typical allwin is approximately 18" wide by 31" tall. The giant allwin is the same height but 22" wide. This may not seem like much of a difference but you will notice a completely different "feel" to the game. This is primarily due to the wider diameter of the ball track. When you play a giant allwin, the ball travels a greater distance before reaching the gallery. More exciting? Only you can decide. From an operator's perspective, they are heavier to transport and take up greater space in an arcade. I believe that these attributes made them less favored by operators. Whatever the reason, giant allwins are the decided minority of allwin games.

Looking at Photos C and D the war theme is instantly recognizable. "C" has the name "Defiant" cut into the aircraft silhouette on the playfield. It would be easy to assume that the name was a description of the spirit of the Brits during these perilous times. In fact, the Defiant was a British RAF fighter aircraft. Produced by Boulton Paul, the Defiant was a two-seater airplane with a forward seated pilot and a rear-facing gunner manning four .303 Browning machine guns operated from a hydraulically powered turret. The more conventional fighters of the day had forward facing wing-mounted guns operated by the pilot. The Defiant was a decided departure from that design. The intent was to free up the pilot to fly the aircraft while the gunner would be able to destroy targets within a wider range. Initial deployment of the Defiant against enemy bombers met with great success. Soon afterward, Luftwaffe pilots learned the Defiant could easily be defeated by simply avoiding the kill zone behind the airplane. The Defiant was defenseless if the enemy approached head-on or from underneath the aircraft. It was then redeployed as a night-fighter, a role at which it excelled until later during the war when radar became commonplace. Oliver Whales was tapping into the patriotic spirit of the people by showcasing a fighter plane as the centerpiece of this game. In addition to the "Defiant," he produced an identical game with "Spitfire" cut into the aircraft template.

Photo D is an unnamed game of identical vintage also by Whales. Each of the 20 winning cups on the playfield has the metal cut-out of a small aircraft behind it. The military theme of the game is unmistakable. A similar looking game exists under the name "Target Tonight." Looking at these two games, it is easy to see the commonality between them. Both have identical red, white and blue plastic backgrounds. It has been pos-

Mills' Perfect Weighing Scale c.1900

by Jim & Merlyn Collings

This extremely Rare scale, (probably the only 1 known), is also called the "Owl". This eye-catching weighing scale has a golden oak column with 4 nickel-plated owls accenting the head, column and footplate (photo 1). The "Owl" measures 84" in height, 28" in width and 28" in depth. This scale was used indoors.

Years ago the "Owl" was brought from Atlantic City, where it was vended to California. It was there that a prominent collector and friend, Mike Gorski from Westlake, Ohio purchased the scale (photo 2). It was advertised in the Antique Trader magazine. Mike mentioned that the "Owl" is one of his favorite machines he's ever owned. Greg McLemore, a prominent collector from California, is now the proud owner of this fabulous scale.

The "Owl" has a handsome marquee which says "YOUR CORRECT WEIGHT 1 CENT". The dial is encased in an oak frame with fluted columns on each side. The head of the scale is supported by a nickel-plated owl on each side.

The dial is made of tin which is lithographed. Printed on the light-green dial are the words: "MILLS PERFECT SCALE", along with health charts and recommendations for height and weight. A beautiful woman is lithographed on the center of the dial. Also written on the dial is: "SUPERFLUOUS FLESH CAN BE REDUCED". The coin entry is located near the top portion of the column, directly under the dial (photo 3).

In the middle of the column is the Mills' logo, an Owl sitting on a branch (photo 1). An ornate cash box is located on the right side of the column. The scale mechanism has an adjusting device for accurate weighing.

The cast-iron base is painted with black enamel. The footplate is decorated with a large owl logo (photo 1).

This handsome scale sold for \$75.00 at the turn of the century. Don't you wish we could go on a spending spree in a Time Machine.

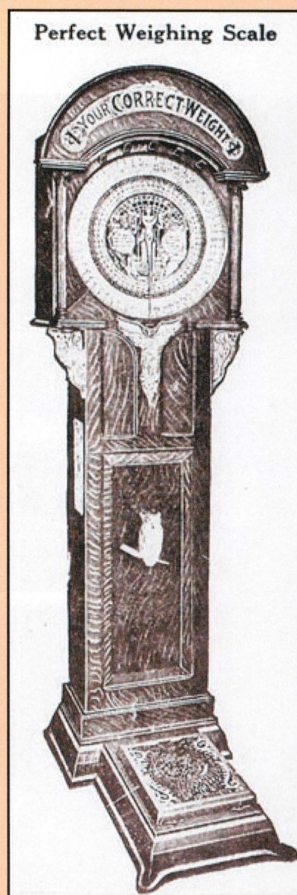


Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3

HAPPY SCALE COLLECTING!

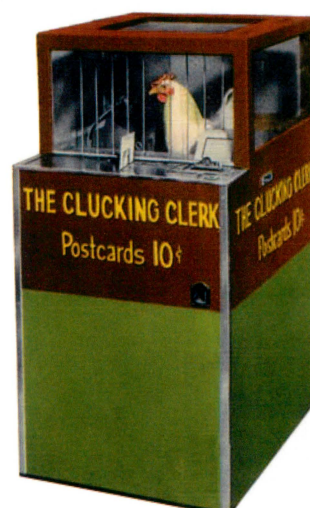
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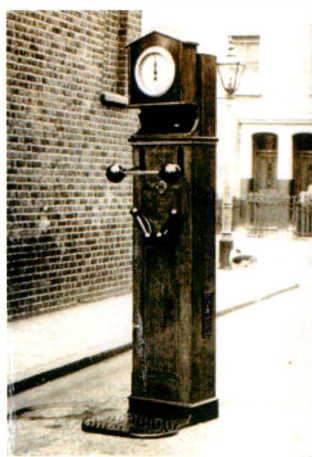


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The Sound of Money Mixes with Music at Chicagoland Antique Advertising Slot Machine and Juke Box Show

by Jack Kelly

The semi-annual Chicagoland Antique Advertising, Slot Machine and Juke Box Show has the reputation of bringing together national and international buyers and sellers, and the April 3-5 event lived up to it's reputation at Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, Ill., 35 miles west of Chicago.

But the shrinking global economy revealed some sellers who were willing to "reduce prices a bit," according to some dealers at the event.

Although the event ran for three days, the Friday opener began early, with buyers in the parking lot searching with flashlights, for hot items as early as 4 a.m., before the doors opened for the Mega Center at 7 in the morning.

"Money is tight but I still forked over \$50 admission to bag some bargains," said one early buyer as he walked into the Mega Center mingling with dealers setting up for the event on Friday.

Others opted to spend \$7 each for a regular admission ticket on Saturday and Sunday.

While some visitors drove just minutes to the show from Chicago suburbs, others like Fred Paganini and Jean-Christophe Crepeau flew in from Paris, France, on a nine-hour flight to purchase American made gambling devices.

"We purchased many slot machines from dealer Frank Zygmunt," said Crepeau, adding, "it's our third time at the Chicagoland Show."

Zygmunt, of Westmont, Ill., crowded several booths with high end and moderately priced slot machines, juke boxes and other vintage gambling machines, most from early American manufacturers.

One exception at his booth was a Swiss-made 1898 2-by 3-foot oak console model coin-operated horse race

game complete with music box and priced at \$55,000. Zygmunt said the ornate piece "was in storage in Europe for over 80 years" before being transported to the U.S. and offered for sale at the April event.

It cost just a penny to step onto a rare 6 foot-tall ornate, heavily decorated cast iron 1903 Caille coin-operated Weight-Teller scale offered by Al and Peggy Araiza, Cushing, Okla., but a Bryantown, Md., couple handed over \$9,000 to bring it home from the show. New owners Donna and Charlie Harrigan were the new owners who drove 14 hours to shop at the April event. "Charlie collects juke boxes and slot machines" said Donna Harrigan, adding, "now it's a family affair because we never know what we'll find, but always come home with something."

Movie collectors were drawn to the Araiza booth to check out a pair of oddball chrome countertop napkin holders, with advertising panels for movies shown at a hometown theater, priced at \$75 each.

"I'm both a dealer and collector of vintage cash registers," said John Arito, Lombard, Ill., who offered a 1910-era National Cash Register 313 model commonly found in early candy stores and barber shops. The "all-original restored" machine could be taken home for \$695. How many registers does Arito have in his collection? "I currently have 35 but have had more in the past" he said, adding with smile, "there's never too many."

Vintage juke box collectors oohed and aahed over a 1928 Plymouth wood cabinet model that could play 45 RPM records consecutively for 5-cents per play. "I know of only three others -- and this one with serial number 9," said dealer Doug Wilderman of Carol Stream, Ill. Made by the Plymouth Radio and Phono-

graph Company of Plymouth, Wis., it could make music at your home for \$4,000.

It was a double-duty weekend for Dale Robinson, a member of the Robinson family which operates the monthly Kane County Antique & Flea Market, also in St. Charles. Robinson said he “snuck away from duties at the flea market” to shop and show at Pheasant Run. What he called “tough to find” advertising items at his booth included an early 1900s 3- by 12-foot tin John Deere Farm Implements sign priced \$20,000 and a 1920s Indian Oil Company one gallon can for \$5,000. Folks with a smaller budget looked over his 34- by 56-inch tin White Rock Soda pop sign priced at \$450.

“It’s been an excellent show, one of the best,” Said Walter Scott of Baraboo, Wis. Catching toy collectors’ attention was a complete 1910 Mr. Roosevelt in Africa game capturing events of President Theodore Roosevelt in board game form and priced at \$2,000. Hunting advertising collectors scoped out a four-piece cardboard advertising sign set from Laflin and Rand Powder Company showing a young boy hunting in seasonal settings. The 8- by 13-inch cardboard, circa 1902, sign set could be taken home for \$2,500.

Bill Bryk of Cowetda, Okla., returned to the Chicagoland show after “taking time off since ’01 to raise my daughter, who is now 19.” He was showing off vintage advertising, including an early teens 3- by 14-inch embossed tin headache medicine sign for \$1,150 and a 1957 lemon lime soda pop sign, with bottle and circa 1957, for \$475.

“It’s been a good show, but it’s not like the old days” said Jim Pursell, who has set up at the show with wife Jan “for at least 20 years.” Coin operated gumball and peanut machines they displayed included an “excellent original” 1930s Blue Bird gumball machine for \$525 and a Magnavender peanut machine for \$495. Sewing and advertising collectors gawked at a 3-foot-long pair of advertising Keen Kutter Scissors found in an old Indiana upholstery shop and offered at the show for \$895.

Kids of all ages stopped to admire, and sometimes ride on, a series of life-size coin operated horse rides commonly seen at grocery and department stores. However, these horses were completely restored, including new American-made leather saddles, shown by Rick Dynek of Milwaukee. Two of the favorites were a “Sandy” 10-cent ride, priced at \$2,995, and a “Ride the Champion” priced \$3,495. The dealer said he offers horses along with a menagerie of others animals including pigs, elephants, tigers and even reindeer among over 60 rides at his shop.

Many people came to shop at the Chicagoland show for “memories from the past.” Such was the case with Jim Stevens of Cedar Falls, Iowa, who purchased a mint vendor front gambling slot machine “just like the one Dad had in back of his old country store.” The 1930s Watling slot machine, completely restored, was going to be installed in “a special spot at home” according to Stevens to remember the days of his youth. The purchase price was \$2,100.

“I remember putting a penny in that machine as a kid” said one browser, pointing to a 15-inch-tall Advance Model-D gumball machine. The classic red vendor was tagged \$185 by Carol Estes, Antique Junction, LaPorte, Ind.

Still another shopper, Michael Murro of Longwood, Fla., was on the lookout for shoe shine and barber shop collectables reminding him of his youthful days of “shining shoes in Georgia.” Murro said he was “extremely happy” with the finds at the show, adding, “I’m always looking for more.”

For many, nostalgia days revolve around the old coin operated Coke Machines popular at soda fountains and gas stations. Jim and Diana Rud of Soda Springs Vintage Soda Machines, Sandwich, Ill., supplied a group of those fully restored old favorites at Chicagoland, including 1950s models of the Vendo 44, \$5,000, Vendo 81 D, \$5,900 and the Vendo 56, \$5,800. Rud said he and his wife Diana “are the complete staff of the business,” which is just a bit over a year old. He estimated it took between 40 and 100 hours of labor to restore each vintage soda pop machine.

Some folks say one of the most oddball items at the show was shown by Chuck Wolf of Kenmore, Wash. The object of desire was a 18-inch-tall, 6-inch deep salesman’s sample showing the vault safe door lock mechanism from the National Safe and Lock Company, Cleveland, Ohio. Encased in a leather felt-lined carry box, the 40-pound nickel, copper and polished aluminum piece was finely machined to show the craftsmanship of the company, and the case opened to show both front and rear views. Wolf said the most common phrase heard when the case was opened was “Ooh, wow!” He added estimated value was “around \$10,000.”

The Chicagoland fall show will be held November 13th, 14th & 15th at Pheasant Resort in St. Charles.

Dealers can get information from co-promoter Bob Traynoff at 1-847-244-9263. Show information is also available from co-promoter Kevin Greco at 1-815-353-1593 and at www.chicagolandshow.com.



Dealer/collector John Arito rests a moment with a 1910 era 313 model National cash register he offered for \$695 at the April event.



The sons of the Chicagoland show promoters, Nicholas Greco, 8 (left) and Samuel Traynoff, 12 test-ride two of the coin-operated horses displayed by dealer Rick Dynek of Milwaukee.

Jim Stevens of Cedar Falls, Iowa purchased this 1930s Wauing Slot machine "just like the one Dad had in back of his old country store" at the Chicagoland Show.



Restored vintage coin operated Coca-Cola machines filled the booth of Soda Springs Vintage Soda Machines of Sandwich, Ill.





Dale Robinson displayed a 12 foot-long tin John Deere dealership sign that he termed a "tough to find item" and priced at \$20,000.



Two buyers from France, Fred Paganini and Jean-Christophe Crepeau check out a slot machine at the booth of Frank Zygmunt, while the dealer stood by completing a telephone deal at the Chicagoland show.



Dealer Al Araiza and shopper Donna Harrigan pause for a moment after Harrigan bought a rare 1903 Caille coin operated scale for \$9,000.



Chuck Wolf checks out his 1900s salesman's sample National Safe and Lock Company, vault lock mechanism that brought multiple comments of "oh wow!" from visitors at the April show.



Shoppers Ewin McCarthy and Alex Bjorklund of St. Paul, Minn., check out the 1898 coin operated horse race machine, complete with music box, priced \$55,000 by dealer Frank Zygmunt, Westmont, Ill.

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The Meteor is a mystery – perhaps one of our members can help in the identification of the maker of this unique coin op item.

The machine can best be described as a payout rotary eight jacks machine. It employs some new technology into a very old and well produced coin op machine. Three, four, and five Jacks are very popular machines and some collectors have multiple examples of the myriad that were produced. The Fortuna was a revolving Jacks machine first built by Charles T. Maley in 1894. Jacks machines have been reproduced many times and are still being replicated today.

The Meteor is played by inserting a nickel into the coin slide. The energy created by pushing in on the slide shoots the previous nickel played into one of eight pie-shaped chambers or into the cash box via the overflow chute. Inserting the nickel also causes a rotary drum to spin. As the drum comes to a stop, eight small gold arrows have a chance of being aligned with a large red arrow silk screened on the glass top. This arrow states “Player takes Jack when arrows meet.” There are 62 total stopping points on the rotary drum. Of these, 17 result in the coin being diverted to the cash box, with the remaining 45 stopping points pushing the money into one of the jackpots. This results in a 27% profit to the operator and a 12% chance for the player to win on each play. A trap door opens if the arrows align dumping the cash inside down a chute towards a payout cup. Each of the pie-shaped chambers is capable of holding up to 30 nickels. The player would receive his reward

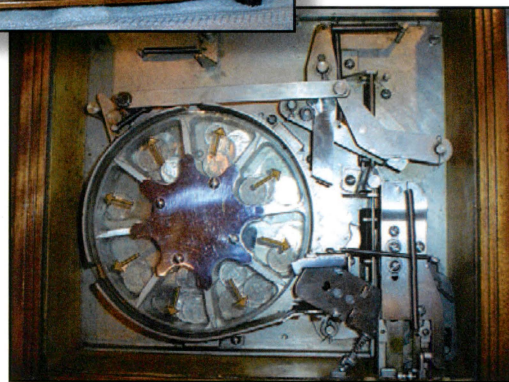
THE METEOR

by Bill Petrochuk

by turning a revolving door to deliver the coins. This door was an anti-cheat device to prevent spooning.

The graphics on the glass, lead one to believe it was made between 1938 and 1949. One clue to “who done it” is the denominator symbol located on the glass. Though hard to see in the photo, it reads “5c per play.” The ¢ symbol is not crossed with a vertical line. It just appears as the letter “c”. Mills was the only manufacturer that dropped this feature during that era. The last slot machines they made with a crossed cent symbol were in the late 30’s. Jennings, Buckley, Bally, and Watling continued using the crossed ¢ symbol during this period.

The mechanism on this machine is quite sophisticated and very well made. The tooling required to produce it would have been quite expensive and thus beyond the resources of most of the manufacturers at that time. My guess is that Mills, Jennings or Buckley were the three shops most likely to produce the machine. There are no identifying marks on the castings or case. The original lock was missing when the machine was obtained in November at the Chicago show. A Mill’s or standard Yale cabinet lock fit perfectly. I first saw this machine (or one identical to it) approximately 15 years ago in Chicago. There must be more of these machines out there but I don’t know anyone who either owns or has seen one. If you have any more information about The Meteor, please send an email to Bill@mebtel.net and we will publish it in the COCA Times.



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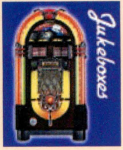
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----- TALES OF THE HUNT -----
will not be featured in this issue....remember it
is up to the members to submit their stories.
Please send to Jack Freund (see address above).

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